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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC): WEEKLY WRAP-UP
FOR 12 MARCH 2004

This is CWC-36-04.

GENEVA GROUP - OIO REFORM

1. (SBU) On March 8, the Geneva Group discussed U.S. proposals for reform of the Office of Internal Oversight. There was general consensus on the need to strengthen the ability of the OIO to perform its oversight functions properly, but a concern about undoing the "political" agreement that outlines the current arrangements on the designation of the OIO Director. Peter van Brakel (Canada) said that it would be advisable to begin the effort to strengthen the OIO now. Ian Mundell (Canada), the OIO report facilitator, agreed that steps are needed to improve the performance of the OIO, but emphasized that this had to be done without overturning the political arrangements on senior staffing, which included the OIO Director. Any action touching on that arrangement, agreed upon after arduous discussions with regional groupings, would fail.

2. (SBU) Mark Matthews (U.K.) stressed that it might be a bad time to take an action which would give the appearance of undercutting the Director-General, a point echoed by Peter Beerwerth (FRG). However, both expressed support for the goal of strengthening the OIO, and Beerwerth added that the DG's response that he was still not able to provide a solution on the home leave travel issue clearly indicates that oversight reform is needed. Beerwerth indicated that while far-reaching changes were not advisable, he thought proposals that do not touch on "political" arrangements could be acceptable. He went on to emphasize that States Parties need to have the political will to make the DG and the TS accountable, and it is somewhat disingenuous to exert the OIO to take action on issues SPs are afraid to touch.

3. (U) Ruth Flint (Switzerland) said that the good relationship with the DG is a valuable commodity, and suggested that it might be best to talk to the DG on this issue informally. Moreover, it might be a bad idea to have too many challenging administrative issues on a 2004 agenda that already includes results-based budgeting. She added that it is indeed hard to imagine that the OIO Director will criticize the boss, and echoed Beerwerth's point that it is important for the States Parties to hold the DG and TS accountable.

4. (U) Chiho Komuro (Japan) said that Japan supports the goal of greater independence of the OIO, but echoed the "political" concerns voiced by others. Johan Verboom (Netherlands) said that it is not clear if far-reaching structural change is needed and questioned whether this is the moment to approach the issue. However, he supported a discussion on what "non-political" steps could be taken immediately. Dominique Anelli (France) noted that it will be difficult to attack this issue simultaneously with the implementation of results-based budgeting.

5. (SBU) The consensus decision of the Geneva Group was to avoid any action which would impact on the "political" decision regarding the OIO director. That would mean:
-- no minimum professional qualifications for the OIO Director,
-- no EC confirmation of the Director's appointment, and
-- no change in the contract for future OIO Directors.

There was support for the "non-political" proposals:
-- prohibiting service on the Management Board and other committees,
-- employing a consultant to develop procedures and methodologies for the OIO,
-- holding regular "Executive Sessions" in which the head of the OIO meets independently with the EC (the consensus was to hold such sessions every three months),
-- specifically authorizing the EC to request the OIO to

address specific issues and concerns,
-- reviewing the staffing structure of OIO,
-- reviewing Article 12 of the Financial Regulations to ensure relevant regulations are unambiguous and adequate,
-- on the External Auditor, amending the Annex to the Financial Regulations to specifically require "value for money audits, a point which Mundell said has now been implemented for the current External Auditor.
The question of providing the OIO with a small consulting budget was left open pending the review of the consultant.

16. (SBU) The group supported Mundell's suggestion that some general point on the importance of strengthening the capabilities of the OIO should be made at upcoming facilitations on the OIO report. If there are no objections, that could be included in Mundell's oral report to the EC and become the basis for future action on the specific measures noted above. Flint added that these topics, as appropriate, also could be included in the budget discussion. Moreover, funding for the consultant could be found in the existing consultation budget.

UNIVERSALITY

17. (U) TS officials led by Huang Yu, Chief of External Relations Division, hosted a March 8 meeting to inform delegations of the status of TS activities and POC nominations (faxed back to AC/CB), and to alert delegations that the TS paper on States not Party was awaiting final approval by the DG (note: the paper was published on March 9, EC-36/S/9). Huang has been busy since the first of the year, having traveled to Egypt, Ethiopia, and Rwanda in his role as "Mr. Universality." He established relationships with the African Union (AU) headquartered in Addis Ababa, and the United Arab League (UAL) in Cairo where he focused on meetings with UAL Disarmament Division officials. UAL officials recommended that disarmament workshops not focus solely on CWC but needed to include all WMD to encourage broad attendance from its member states. Huang reported that the UN was indeed sponsoring such a workshop and that the OPCW would be a participant.

18. (U) Huang reported that Madagascar requested 500 copies of the CWC in French (which the TS provided) as well as technical assistance for its accession effort. Rwanda reported that its instrument of accession was currently in the President's Office, and that it hoped to deposit its documents in New York by the April 2004 workshop in Addis Ababa.

19. (U) Huang noted that Norway and Japan made voluntary contributions to the TS efforts on universality. He also invited SPs to send senior representatives to the upcoming universality workshops in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (April), and Malta (May). Huang is particularly concerned about the Malta workshop and stressed the need for SPs to demarche Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel to encourage their attendance. Huang reported that nine SPs have appointed POCs (Chile, Mexico, Oman, Palau, Poland, Slovak Republic, Tajikistan, UK, US). Japan and South Korea noted that their capitals were about to appoint POCs.

110. (U) Ito sends.
RUSSEL